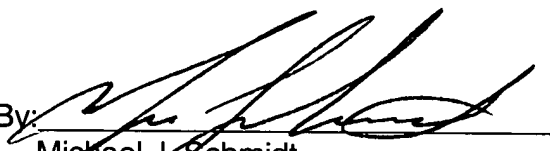


REMARKS

Claims 1 – 33 remain pending in the application. Claims 8, 12 – 16, 20, and 24 have been amended. The purpose of this preliminary amendment is to remove multiple dependent claims from the application to reduce filing costs. Consideration of the application as amended is requested.

Respectfully submitted,

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ATTACHMENT FOR CLAIM AMENDMENTS

The following is a marked up version of each replacement claim in which underlines indicates insertions and brackets indicate deletions.

8. (AMENDED) A vector containing the nucleic acid molecule according to Claim 5 [or 6], characterized in that the vector is capable of expressing the nucleic acid molecule upon introduction into an appropriate host cell or microorganism.

12. (AMENDED) A host cell or microorganism transformed with the vector as defined in [any one of] Claim[s] 8 [to 11].

13. (AMENDED) A method for generating the peptide or protein, as defined in [any one of] Claim[s] 1 [to 3], comprising inserting a nucleic acid molecule that encodes the peptide or protein into a vector construct that it is capable of being expressed in an appropriate host cell or microorganism, transforming a host cell or microorganism with the vector construct, culturing the transformed host cell or microorganism, and isolating and purifying the resulting peptide or protein product.

14. (AMENDED) A method for producing a purified antibody against the pE2 peptide, as defined in [any one of] Claim[s] 1 [to 3], comprising injecting into a non-human mammalian host, an immunologically effective amount of the pE2 peptide, and isolating and purifying the antibody produced.

15. (AMENDED) A purified antibody, or fragment thereof, which has been raised against the pE2 peptide, as defined in [any one of] Claim[s] 1 [to 3].

16. (AMENDED) A vaccine composition for immunizing an individual against infection from hepatitis E virus (HEV) comprising the pE2 peptide, as defined in [any one of] Claim[s] 1 [to 3], and a pharmacologically acceptable carrier.

20. (AMENDED) A method according to Claim 18 [or 19], characterized in that the presence of the immunological complex is determined following incubation with an indicator reagent under conditions permitting a reaction to occur.

24. (AMENDED) A diagnostic test kit according to Claim 22 [or 23], characterized in that the peptide pE2, is immobilized to a solid support.